

Appropriations Committee Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
DMHAS Budget
Thursday, February 24th, 2022

Good Afternoon, Senator Cathy Osten, Representative Toni Walker and other members of the appropriations committee. I'm a voter of district 100, and currently a person in recovery at Connecticut Valley Hospital-Whiting Hospital, (CVH) Dutcher North 2. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the services and overwhelming support from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Specifically, I fall into this category because I am a person in mental health and substance abuse recovery.

I've been clean and sober for ten years and I recently became a Recovery Support Specialist, also known as an RSS. My life is meaningful; I have purpose, and I have hope. I strive to continue to make connections in the community as a productive citizen. More importantly, I would not be the person I am today without the treatment provided to me clinically. However, I feel the vocational aspect of my recovery is just as beneficial because it prepares me to work efficiently and productively in an upstanding career. Imagine working in the patient work program and only being able to make \$14.50 a week, trying to save money for an apartment and additional future expenses for community life. Patients like myself have expressed that we would like more work hours and opportunities to learn the job skills needed to work in the competitive work force.

I would like to end with the committee having the opportunity to ponder that although the mental health services are doing a lot for consumers, more services are needed. Education is limited to attaining a GED. Job training and trade skills are non-existing! I feel that it is just as important to us to have money and the opportunity to learn and grow as it is for everyone else. In the Department of Corrections, (DOC) The inmates are offered more resources so they are well suited when they return to the community; this is needed. Please invest in the patients here at CVH-Whiting Hospital and provide funding for vocational services that help us become productive citizens of our state CT.